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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR NSA HADLEY'S VISIT TO TURKEY

Classified By: Ambassador Ross Wilson for reasons 1.4(b),(d)

Dear Mr. Hadley,

¶1. (C) Summary. US-Turkish relations have been transformed in the nearly three years since your last visit in 2005. You come right after Erdogan's visit to Baghdad (July 10), Boyden Gray's visit here (July 11) and President Bush's July 11 condolence call to President Gul over the Istanbul consulate shootings. Turkish leaders continue to work a range of issues, including Iraq, Israel/Syria, South Asia, Armenia and Cyprus, and they will want to discuss these with you -- despite the pending AKP closure case. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Your last visit in Fall 2005 was a catalyst that revived senior-level dialogue. Visitors in the months that followed include then-SACEUR Gen. Jones, CIA Director Goss, FBI Director Muller and Secretary Rice. Progress was slow, but Secretary Rice and then-FM Gul concluded a Shared Vision paper in June 2006 that kept our relations on even keel despite the PKK and other problems. PM Erdogan's Oval Office meeting in November 2007, and the sharing of actionable intelligence on the PKK that followed, marked a big turning point. We have been busy with high-level exchanges since: Secretary Bodman (12/07), President Gul (1/08), Secretaries Mukasey and Gates (2/08), the Vice President (3/08), Secretary Chertoff (5/08) and FM Babacan (6/08). It's emblematic that Secretary Gates was the first SECDEF to come here since 2002. Visits by Generals Cartwright and Petraeus in November, February, April and July have spearheaded our PKK collaboration.

IRAQ/PKK

¶3. (C) Turkish strikes against the PKK has removed the PKK as a contentious issue in Turkish-US and Turkish-Iraqi relations, to facilitate a revival of contacts with the Iraqi Kurds, and to isolate and degrade the PKK. Besides their military losses, the PKK has been hit by defections, and Murat Karayilan, its most prominent leader other than jailed Abdullah Ocalan, may be looking for a way out. That progress made possible what had previously been an unimaginable visit July 10 by PM Erdogan to Baghdad -- only the second regional head of government (after Ahmedinejad) to visit Iraq since ¶2003. Erdogan and PM Maliki signed a Strategic Agreement that provides for regular, PM-led dialogue and is a framework for developing bilateral political, security, mil-mil and economic ties. Erdogan publicly commended Iraqi and Iraqi Kurd help on the PKK. An opportunity to break the ice with Massoud Barzani fell victim to the KRG leader's late June public statement that the PKK is not a terror organization; the Turks invited Nechirvan Barzani, but he was out of the

country.

¶ 14. (C) Looking ahead, the Turks are nervous about the prospects for US presence in Iraq after January 20. They regard Kirkuk as an ethnic time bomb and have tried to leverage their nascent dialogue with the KRG to encourage at least short-term compromises in exchange for the possibility of eventual acceptance of a consensual outcome, even one dominated by the Kurds. The annual rollover of our authorization to use Incirlik for Iraq support operations has been held to six months, when the relevant UNSCR expires, but officials tell us they will find a way to continue current arrangements. You should highlight our intention to remain in sync with Iraq, appreciation of Erdogan's efforts to develop Turkish-Iraqi relations, and critical need for Turkey to facilitate US support via Incirlik and the ground transit of supplies.

IRAN

¶ 15. (C) FM Mottaki will arrive in Ankara as you depart July 17, apparently to follow-up on June-July discussions with FM Babacan at the Paris Afghanistan donors' conference, the OIC FM meeting in Kampala, and the D8 summit in Kuala Lumpur. The Turks have reportedly urged Tehran strongly to work with the P5/1 proposal on the nuclear issue. Mottaki may propose more active Turkish engagement, perhaps even as a mediator; having provided a venue for a Solana/Larijani meeting in 2007, Ankara is prepared to reprise that role and otherwise "facilitate" progress, but has not been willing to get directly involved. Their relations with Iran remain wary but

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good. You should encourage them to continue to deliver strong messages to Tehran and to slow-roll progress on future gas deals.

MIDDLE EAST

¶ 16. (S/NF) Turkey has engineered a role for itself that more engaged and less at the margins of the Middle East. It has troops in UNIFIL, and Erdogan and PM foreign affairs advisor Davutoglu were deeply involved in talks to resolve Lebanon's political crisis in April-May. Via soft diplomacy and NGOs, Turkey has tried to promote economic development in the West Bank and Gaza and to build Israeli-Palestinian ties. Most importantly, it has hosted three rounds of proximity talks in Istanbul between Israel and Syria, the latest occurring July 1-2; a fourth should occur late this month. The Turks have been clear in discussions here they expect to take matters only so far and then, when the parties are ready, hand the process off to us. Ankara believes both sides are serious, focusing on security and land once they got past the preliminaries. MFA officials told us both Turkey and Israel have committed to continue these efforts whatever may happen to PM Olmert and PM Erdogan.

CAUCASUS and CYPRUS

¶ 17. (C) Turkish officials have expressed wariness about potential instabilities in the Caucasus. Developments in Georgia are particularly alarming, and Ankara is also worried about the potential for a negative slide in relations between Armenia and Azerbaijan as Nagorno-Karabakh continues to stalemate. Perhaps in part for this reason, Turkey and Armenia are in mutual overture mode. Among other elements are Turkey's congratulatory messages to Armenia's new leaders and President Sargsian's invitation for President Gul to attend the Turkey-Armenia World Cup qualifier in Yerevan September 6. We have strongly urged Ankara to work to normalize its relations with Yerevan, noting how supportive this would be of progress on N-K. Domestic political weaknesses in both Armenia and Turkey, of course, complicate their ability to come together.

¶ 18. (C) Turkey is cautiously hopeful about UN efforts to

revive comprehensive Cyprus negotiations as long as they're based on the "UN body of work" (aka the Annan plan and its predecessors). The next Christofias/Talat meeting is set for July 25 and should produce an announcement of direct negotiations to begin in September. MFA officials insist Ankara has given Talat broad latitude. PM Erdogan will reportedly visit Turkish Cyprus on July 18.

AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN

¶ 9. (C) Two trilateral Afghanistan-Pakistan-Turkey "Ankara Summits" have provided a helpful forum for direct dialogue between Karzai and Musharraf. Turkey strongly supports hosting another meeting, possibly in September. The issue of who represents Pakistan has been a stumbling block, with Nawaz Sharif rejecting any role for President Musharraf. The Turks say either or both PM Gillani and President Musharraf would be fine, and they reportedly urged PPP leader Zardari to authorize them to travel to Ankara together on the grounds that co-participation would project political unity.

ENERGY

¶ 10. (SBU) Turkey is the key southern corridor for Caspian gas to Europe, but it hopes to leverage that role to secure more gas for itself to augment the country's overall energy supplies and supplant Russian and Iranian gas on which it is over-reliant. PM Erdogan reaffirmed to Boyden Gray last Friday that Nabucco and the Turkey-Greece-Italy (TGI) gas pipelines are top priorities. However, his energy minister's tough bargaining over gas price and supplies for Turkey itself has irritated Baku, left Europeans confused about what Turkey wants, and delayed Nabucco. The goal of augmenting overall supplies for Turkey and for Nabucco/TGI put energy atop Erdogan's agenda in Baghdad. Ankara especially wants to see gas flow north and has proposed a new gas pipeline to follow the existing Kirkuk-Ceyhan oil line route. It also hopes to see Turkish firms participate in the development of Iraqi oil and gas, but waits like everyone for passage of hydrocarbon legislation.

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